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- ART. III. — 1. *The Works of DANIEL WEBSTER.* Twelfth Edition. Boston: Little, Brown, & Co. 1860. 6 vols. 8vo.
2. — *The Private Correspondence of DANIEL WEBSTER.* Edited by FLETCHER WEBSTER. Boston: Little, Brown, & Co. 1857. 2 vols. 8vo.
3. — *Life and Memorials of DANIEL WEBSTER.* From the New York Daily Times. New York: D. Appleton & Co. 1853. 2 vols. 12mo.
4. — *The Private Life of DANIEL WEBSTER.* By CHARLES LANMAN. New York: Harper and Brothers. 1852.

OF words spoken in recent times, few have touched so many hearts as those uttered by Sir Walter Scott on his death-bed. There has seldom been so much of mere enjoyment crowded into the compass of one lifetime as there was into his. Even his work—all of his best work—was only more elaborate and keenly relished play; for story-telling, the occupation of his maturity, had first been the delight of his childhood, and remained always his favorite recreation. Triumph rewarded his early efforts, and admiration followed him to the grave. Into no human face could this man look, nor into any crowd of faces, which did not return his glance with a gaze of admiring love. He lived precisely where and how it was happiest for him to live; and he had above most men of his time that disposition of mind which makes the best of bad fortune and the most of good. But when his work and his play were all done, and he came calmly to review his life, and the life of man on earth, this was the sum of his reflections, this was what he had to say to the man to whom he had confided his daughter's happiness: "Lockhart, I may have but a minute to speak to you. My dear, be a good man, — be virtuous, — be religious, — be a good man. Nothing else will give you any comfort when you come to lie here."

So do we all feel in view of the open coffin, much as we may differ as to what it *is* to be good, virtuous, and religious. Was this man, who lies dead here before us, faithful to his trust? Was he sincere, pure, just, and benevolent? Did he help civilization, or was he an obstacle in its way? Did he ripen and

improve to the end, or did he degenerate and go astray? These are the questions which are silently considered when we look upon the still countenance of death, and especially when the departed was a person who influenced his generation long and powerfully. Usually it is only the last of these questions which mortals can answer with any certainty; but from the answer to that one we infer the answers to all the others. As it is only the wise who learn, so it is only the good who improve. When we see a man gaining upon his faults as he advances in life, when we find him more self-contained and cheerful, more learned and inquisitive, more just and considerate, more single-eyed and noble in his aims, at fifty than he was at forty, and at seventy than he was at fifty, we have the best reason perceptible by human eyes for concluding that he has been governed by right principles and good feelings. We have a right to pronounce such a person *good*, and he is justified in believing us.

The three men most distinguished in public life during the last forty years in the United States were Henry Clay, John C. Calhoun, and Daniel Webster. Henry Clay improved as he grew old. He was a venerable, serene, and virtuous old man. The impetuosity, restlessness, ambition, and love of display, and the detrimental habits of his earlier years, gave place to tranquillity, temperance, moderation, and a patriotism without the alloy of personal objects. Disappointment had chastened, not soured him. Public life enlarged, not narrowed him. The city of Washington purified, not corrupted him. He came there a gambler, a drinker, a profuse consumer of tobacco, and a turner of night into day. He overcame the worst of those habits very early in his residence at the capital. He came to Washington to exhibit his talents, he remained there to serve his country; nor of his country did he ever think the less, or serve her less zealously, because she denied him the honor he coveted for thirty years. We cannot say this of Calhoun. He degenerated frightfully during the last twenty years of his life. His energy degenerated into intensity, and his patriotism narrowed into sectionalism. He became unteachable, incapable of considering an opinion opposite to his own, or even a fact that did not favor it. Exempt by his bodily constitution

from all temptation to physical excesses, his body was worn out by the intense, unhealthy working of his mind. False opinions falsely held and intolerantly maintained were the debauchery that sharpened the lines of his face, and converted his voice into a bark. Peace, health, and growth early became impossible to him, for there was a canker in the heart of the man. His once not dishonorable desire of the Presidency became at last an infuriate lust after it, which his natural sincerity compelled him to reveal even while wrathfully denying it. He considered that he had been defrauded of the prize, and he had some reason for thinking so. Some men avenge their wrongs by the pistol, others by invective ; but the only weapons which this man could wield were abstract propositions. From the hills of South Carolina he hurled paradoxes at General Jackson, and appealed from the dicta of Mrs. Eaton's drawing-room to a hair-splitting theory of States' Rights. Fifteen hundred thousand armed men have since sprung up from those harmless-looking dragon's teeth, so recklessly sown in the hot Southern soil.

Of the three men whom we have named, Daniel Webster was incomparably the most richly endowed by nature. In his lifetime it was impossible to judge him aright. His presence usually overwhelmed criticism ; his intimacy always fascinated it. It so happened, that he grew to his full stature and attained his utmost development in a community where human nature appears to be undergoing a process of diminution, — where people are smaller-boned, less muscular, more nervous, and more susceptible than their ancestors. He possessed, in consequence, an enormous physical magnetism, as we term it, over his fellow-citizens, apart from the natural influence of his talents and understanding. Fidgety men were quieted in his presence, women were spellbound by it, and the busy, anxious public contemplated his majestic calm with a feeling of relief, as well as admiration. Large numbers of people in New England, for many years, reposed upon Daniel Webster. He represented to them the majesty and the strength of the government of the United States. He gave them a sense of safety. Amid the flighty politics of the time and the loud insincerities of Washington, there seemed one solid thing in America, so

long as he sat in an arm-chair of the Senate-Chamber. When he appeared in State Street, slowly pacing, with an arm behind him, business was brought to an absolute stand-still. As the whisper passed along, the windows filled with clerks, pen in mouth, peering out to catch a glimpse of the man whom they had seen fifty times before ; while the bankers and merchants hastened forth to give him salutation, or exchange a passing word, happy if they could but catch his eye. At home, and in a good mood, he was reputed to be as entertaining a man as New England ever held,—a gambolling, jocund leviathan out on the sea-shore, and in the library overflowing with every kind of knowledge that can be acquired without fatigue, and received without preparation. Mere celebrity, too, is dazzling to some minds. While, therefore, this imposing person lived among us, he was blindly worshipped by many, blindly hated by some, calmly considered by very few. To this hour he is a great influence in the United States. Perhaps, with the abundant material now accessible, it is not too soon to attempt to ascertain how far he was worthy of the estimation in which his fellow-citizens held him, and what place he ought to hold in the esteem of posterity. At least, it can never be unpleasing to Americans to recur to the most interesting specimen of our kind that has lived in America since Franklin.

He could not have been born in a better place, nor of better stock, nor at a better time, nor reared in circumstances more favorable to harmonious development. He grew up in the Switzerland of America. From a hill on his father's New Hampshire farm, he could see most of the noted summits of New England. Granite-topped Kearsarge stood out in bold relief near by ; Mount Washington and its attendant peaks, not yet named, bounded the northern horizon like a low, silvery cloud ; and the principal heights of the Green Mountains, rising near the Connecticut River, were clearly visible. The Merrimac, most serviceable of rivers, begins its course a mile or two off, formed by the union of two mountain torrents. Among those hills, high up, sometimes near the summits, lakes are found, broad, deep, and still ; and down the sides run innumerable rills, which form those noisy brooks that rush along the bottom of the hills, where now the roads wind along, shaded by the

mountain, and enlivened by the music of the waters. Among these hills there are, here and there, expanses of level country large enough for a farm, with the addition of some fields upon the easier acclivities and woodlands higher up. There was one field of a hundred acres upon Captain Webster's mountain farm so level that a lamb could be seen on any part of it from the windows of the house. Every tourist knows that region now,—that wide, billowy expanse of dark mountains and vivid green fields, dotted with white farm-houses, and streaked with silvery streams. It was rougher, seventy years ago, secluded, hardly accessible, the streams unbridged, the roads of primitive formation; but the worst of the rough work had been done there, and the production of superior human beings had become possible, before the Webster boys were born.

Daniel Webster's father was the strong man of his neighborhood; the very model of a republican citizen and hero,—stalwart, handsome, brave, and gentle. Ebenezer Webster inherited no worldly advantages. Sprung from a line of New Hampshire farmers, he was apprenticed, in his thirteenth year, to another New Hampshire farmer; and when he had served his time, he enlisted as a private soldier in the old French war, and came back from the campaigns about Lake George a captain. He never went to school. Like so many other New England boys, he learned what is essential for the carrying on of business in the chimney-corner, by the light of the fire. He possessed one beautiful accomplishment: he was a grand reader. Unlettered as he was, he greatly enjoyed the more lofty compositions of poets and orators; and his large, sonorous voice enabled him to read them with fine effect. His sons read in his manner, even to his rustic pronunciation of some words. Daniel's calm, clear-cut rendering of certain noted passages—favorites in his early home—was all his father's. There is a pleasing tradition in the neighborhood, of the teamsters who came to Ebenezer Webster's mill saying to one another, when they had discharged their load and tied their horses, "Come, let us go in, and hear little Dan read a psalm." The French war ended, Captain Webster, in compensation for his services, received a grant of land in the mountain wilderness at the head of the Merrimac, where, as miller and farmer, he lived and

reared his family. The Revolutionary War summoned this noble yeoman to arms once more. He led forth his neighbors to the strife, and fought at their head, with his old rank of captain, at White Plains and at Bennington, and served valiantly through the war. From that time to the end of his life, though much trusted and employed by his fellow-citizens as legislator, magistrate, and judge, he lived but for one object,—the education and advancement of his children. All men were poor then in New Hampshire, compared with the condition of their descendants. Judge Webster was a poor, and even embarrassed man, to the day of his death. The hardships he had endured as soldier and pioneer made him, as he said, an old man before his time. Rheumatism bent his form, once so erect and vigorous. Black care subdued his spirits, once so joyous and elastic. Such were the fathers of fair New England.

This strong-minded, uncultured man was a Puritan and a Federalist,—a catholic, tolerant, and genial Puritan, an intolerant and almost bigoted Federalist. Washington, Adams, and Hamilton were the civilians highest in his esteem; the good Jefferson he dreaded and abhorred. The French Revolution was mere blackness and horror to him; and when it assumed the form of Napoleon Bonaparte, his heart sided passionately with England in her struggle to extirpate it. His boys were in the fullest sympathy with him in all his opinions and feelings. They, too, were tolerant and untheological Puritans; they, too, were most strenuous Federalists; and neither of them ever recovered from their father's influence, nor advanced much beyond him in their fundamental beliefs. Readers have, doubtless, remarked, in Mr. Webster's oration upon Adams and Jefferson, how the stress of the eulogy falls upon Adams, while cold and scant justice is meted out to the greatest and wisest of our statesmen. It was Ebenezer Webster who spoke that day, with the more melodious voice of his son. There is a tradition in New Hampshire that Judge Webster fell sick on a journey in a town of Republican politics, and besought the doctor to help him speedily on his way home, saying that he was born a Federalist, had lived a Federalist, and could not die in peace in any but a Federalist town.

Among the ten children of this sturdy patriot and partisan,

eight were ordinary mortals, and two most extraordinary,—Ezekiel, born in 1780, and Daniel, born in 1782,—the youngest of his boys. Some of the elder children were even less than ordinary. Elderly residents of the neighborhood speak of one half-brother of Daniel and Ezekiel as penurious and narrow; and the letters of others of the family indicate very plain, good, commonplace people. But these two, the sons of their father's prime, inherited all his grandeur of form and beauty of countenance, his taste for high literature, along with a certain energy of mind that came to them, by some unknown law of nature, from their father's mother. From her Daniel derived his jet-black hair and eyes, and his complexion of burnt gunpowder; though all the rest of the children except one were remarkable for fairness of complexion, and had sandy hair. Ezekiel, who was considered the handsomest man in the United States, had a skin of singular fairness, and light hair. He is vividly remembered in New Hampshire for his marvellous beauty of form and face, his courtly and winning manners, the weight and majesty of his presence. He was a signal refutation of Dr. Holmes's theory, that grand manners and high breeding are the result of several generations of culture. Until he was nineteen, this peerless gentleman worked on a rough mountain farm on the outskirts of civilization, as his ancestors had for a hundred and fifty years before him; but he was refined to the tips of his finger-nails and to the buttons of his coat. Like his more famous brother, he had an artist's eye for the becoming in costume, and a keen sense for all the proprieties and decorums both of public and private life. Limited in his view by the narrowness of his provincial sphere, as well as by inherited prejudices, he was a better man and citizen than his brother, without a touch of his genius. Nor was that half-brother of Daniel, who had the black hair and eyes and gunpowder skin, at all like Daniel, or equal to him in mental power.

There is nothing in our literature more pleasing than the glimpses it affords of the early life of these two brothers;—Ezekiel, robust, steady-going, persevering, self-denying; Daniel, careless of work, eager for play, often sick, always slender and weakly, and regarded rather as a burden upon the family than

a help to it. His feebleness early habituated him to being a recipient of aid and favor, and it decided his destiny. It has been the custom in New England, from the earliest time, to bring up one son of a prosperous family to a profession, and the one selected was usually the boy who seemed least capable of earning a livelihood by manual labor. Ebenezer Webster, heavily burdened with responsibility all his life long, had most ardently desired to give his elder sons a better education than he had himself enjoyed, but could not. When Daniel was a boy, his large family was beginning to lift his load a little; the country was filling up; his farm was more productive, and he felt somewhat more at his ease. His sickly youngest son, because he was sickly, and only for that reason, he chose from his numerous brood to send to an academy, designing to make a schoolmaster of him. We have no reason to believe that any of the family saw anything extraordinary in the boy. Except that he read aloud unusually well, he had given no sign of particular talent, unless it might be that he excelled in catching trout, shooting squirrels, and fighting cocks. His mother, observing his love of play and his equal love of books, said he "would come to something or nothing, she could not tell which"; but his father, noticing his power over the sympathies of others, and comparing him with his bashful brother, used to remark, that he had fears for Ezekiel, but that Daniel would assuredly make his way in the world. It is certain that the lad himself was totally unconscious of possessing extraordinary talents, and indulged no early dream of greatness. He tells us himself, that he loved but two things in his youth,—play and reading. The rude schools which he trudged two or three miles in the winter every day to attend, taught him scarcely anything. His father's saw-mill, he used to say, was the real school of his youth. When he had set the saw and turned on the water, there would be fifteen minutes of tranquillity before the log again required his attention, during which he sat and absorbed knowledge. "We had so few books," he records in the exquisite fragment of autobiography he has left us, "that to read them once or twice was nothing. We thought they were all to be got by heart."

How touching the story, so well known, of the mighty struggle and long self-sacrifice it cost this family to get the

youth through college ! The whole expense did not average one hundred and fifty dollars a year ; but it seemed to the boy so vast and unattainable a good, that when his father announced his purpose to attempt it, he was completely overcome ; his head was dizzy ; his tongue was paralyzed ; he could only press his father's hands and shed tears. Slender indeed was his preparation for Dartmouth. From the day when he took his first Latin lesson to that on which he entered college was thirteen months. He could translate Cicero's orations with some ease, and make out with difficulty and labor the easiest sentences of the Greek Reader, and that was the whole of what was called his "preparation" for college. In June, 1797, he did not know the Greek alphabet ; in August of the same year he was admitted to the Freshman Class of Dartmouth on engaging to supply his deficiencies by extra study.

Neither at college nor at any time could Daniel Webster be properly called a student, and well he knew it. Many a time he has laughed, in his jovial, rollicking manner, at the preposterous reputation for learning a man can get by bringing out a fragment of curious knowledge at the right moment at college. He was an absorbent of knowledge, never a student. The Latin of Cicero and Virgil was congenial and easy to him, and he learned more of it than the required portion. But even in Latin, he tells us, he was excelled by some of his own class ; and "his attainments were not such," he adds, "as told for much in the recitation-room." Greek he never enjoyed : his curiosity was never awakened on the edge of that boundless contiguity of interesting knowledge, and he only learned enough Greek to escape censure. He said, forty years after, in an after-dinner speech : "When I was at school I felt exceedingly obliged to Homer's messengers for the exact literal fidelity with which they delivered their messages. The seven or eight lines of good Homeric Greek in which they had received the commands of Agamemnon or Achilles they recited to whomsoever the message was to be carried ; and as they repeated them verbatim, sometimes twice or thrice, it saved me the trouble of learning so much Greek." It was not at "school" that he had this experience, but at Dartmouth College. For mathematics, too, he had not the slightest taste. He humorously wrote to a

fellow-student, soon after leaving college, that "all that he knew about conterminous arches or evanescent subtenses might be collected on the pupil of a gnat's eye without making him wink." At college, in fact, he was simply an omnivorous reader, studying only so much as to pass muster in the recitation-room. Every indication we possess of his college life, as well as his own repeated assertions, confirms the conclusion that Nature had formed him to use the products of other men's toil, not to add to the common fund. Those who are conversant with college life know very well what it means when a youth does not take to Greek, and has an aversion to mathematics. Such a youth may have immense talent, and give splendid expression to the sentiments of his countrymen, but he is not likely to be one of the priceless few of the human race who discover truth or advance opinion. It is the energetic, the originating minds that are susceptible to the allurements of difficulty.

On the other hand, Daniel Webster had such qualities as made every one feel that he was the first man in the College. Tall, gaunt, and sallow, with an incomparable forehead, and those cavernous and brilliant eyes of his, he had much of the large and tranquil presence which was so important an element of his power over others at all periods of his life. His letters of this time, as well as the recollections of his fellow-students, show him the easy, humorous, rather indolent and strictly correct "good fellow," whom professors and companions equally relished. He browsed much in the College library, and had the habit of bringing to bear upon the lesson of the hour the information gathered in his miscellaneous reading, — a practice that much enlivens the monotony of recitation. The half-dozen youths of his particular set, it appears, plumed themselves upon resembling the early Christians in having all things in common. The first to rise in the morning — and he must have been an early riser indeed who was up before Daniel Webster — "dressed himself in the best which the united apartments afforded"; the next made the best selection from what remained; and the last was happy if he found rags enough to justify his appearance in the chapel. The relator of this pleasant reminiscence adds, that he was once the possessor of an eminently respectable beaver hat, a costly article of resplendent lustre. It

was missing one day, could not be found, and was given up for lost. Several weeks after "friend Dan" returned from a distant town, where he had been teaching school, wearing the lost beaver, and relieving its proprietor from the necessity of covering his head with a battered and long-discarded hat of felt. How like the Daniel Webster of later years, who never could acquire the sense of *meum* and *tuum*, supposed to be the basis of civilization!

Mr. Webster always spoke slightly of his early oratorical efforts, and requested Mr. Everett, the editor of his works, not to search them out. He was not just to the productions of his youth, if we may judge from the Fourth-of-July oration which he delivered in 1800, when he was a Junior at Dartmouth, eighteen years of age. This glowing psalm of the republican David is perfectly characteristic, and entirely worthy of him. The times that tried men's souls,—how recent and vivid they were to the sons of Ebenezer Webster, who had led forth from the New Hampshire hills the neighbors at whose firesides Ezekiel and Daniel had listened, open-mouthed, to the thousand forgotten incidents of the war. Their professors of history were old John Bowen, who had once been a prisoner with the Indians; Robert Wise, who had sailed round the world and fought in the Revolution on *both* sides; George Bayly, a pioneer, who saw the first tree felled in Northern New Hampshire; women of the neighborhood, who had heard the midnight yell of savages; and, above all, their own lion-hearted father, who had warred with Frenchmen, Indians, wild nature, British troops, and French ideas. "O," wrote Daniel once, "I shall never hear such story-telling again!" It was not in the cold pages of Hildreth, nor in the brief summaries of school-books, that this imaginative, sympathetic youth had learned that part of the political history of the United States—from 1787 to 1800—which will ever be its most interesting portion. He learned it at town-meetings, in the newspapers, at his father's house, among his neighbors, on election days; he learned it as an intelligent youth, with a passionately loyal father and mother, learned the history of the late war, and is now learning the agonizing history of "reconstruction." This oration is the warm and modest expression of all that the re-

ceptive and unsceptical student had imbibed and felt during the years of his formation, who saw before him a large company of Revolutionary soldiers and a great multitude of Federalist partisans. He saluted the audience as "Countrymen, brethren, and fathers." The oration was chiefly a rapid, exulting review of the history of the young Republic, with an occasional pomposity, and a few expressions caught from the party discussions of the day. It is amusing to hear this young Federalist of 1800 speak of Napoleon Bonaparte as "the gasconading pilgrim of Egypt," and the government of France as the "supercilious, five-headed Directory," and the President of the United States as "the firm, the wise, the inflexible Adams, who with steady hand draws the disguising veil from the intrigues of foreign enemies and the plots of domestic foes." It is amusing to read, as the utterance of Daniel Webster, that "Columbia is now seated in the forum of nations, and the empires of the world are amazed at the bright effulgence of her glory." But it is interesting to observe, also, that at eighteen, not less fervently than at forty-eight, he felt the importance of the message with which he was charged to the American people,—the necessity of the Union, and the value of the Constitution as the uniting bond. The following passage has, perhaps, more in it of the Webster of 1830 than any other in the oration. The reader will notice the similarity between one part of it and the famous passage in the Bunker Hill oration, beginning "Venerable men," addressed to the survivors of the Revolution.

"Thus, friends and citizens, did the kind hand of overruling Providence conduct us, through toils, fatigues, and dangers, to independence and peace. If piety be the rational exercise of the human soul, if religion be not a chimera, and if the vestiges of heavenly assistance are clearly traced in those events which mark the annals of our nation, it becomes us on this day, in consideration of the great things which have been done for us, to render the tribute of unfeigned thanks to that God who superintends the universe, and holds aloft the scale that weighs the destinies of nations.

"The conclusion of the Revolutionary War did not accomplish the entire achievements of our countrymen. Their military character was then, indeed, sufficiently established; but the time was coming which should prove their political sagacity, their ability to govern themselves.

“No sooner was peace restored with England, (the first grand article of which was the acknowledgment of our independence,) than the old system of Confederation, dictated at first by necessity, and adopted for the purposes of the moment, was found inadequate to the government of an extensive empire. Under a full conviction of this, we then saw the people of these States engaged in a transaction which is undoubtedly the greatest approximation towards human perfection the political world ever yet witnessed, and which, perhaps, will forever stand in the history of mankind without a parallel. A great republic, composed of different States, whose interest in all respects could not be perfectly compatible, then came deliberately forward, discarded one system of government, and adopted another, without the loss of one man’s blood.

“There is not a single government now existing in Europe which is not based in usurpation, and established, if established at all, by the sacrifice of thousands. But in the adoption of our present system of jurisprudence, we see the powers necessary for government voluntarily flowing from the people, their only proper origin, and directed to the public good, their only proper object.

“With peculiar propriety, we may now felicitate ourselves on that happy form of mixed government under which we live. The advantages resulting to the citizens of the Union are utterly incalculable, and the day when it was received by a majority of the States shall stand on the catalogue of American anniversaries second to none but the birthday of independence.

“In consequence of the adoption of our present system of government, and the virtuous manner in which it has been administered by a Washington and an Adams, we are this day in the enjoyment of peace, while war devastates Europe! We can now sit down beneath the shadow of the olive, while her cities blaze, her streams run purple with blood, and her fields glitter with a forest of bayonets! The citizens of America can this day throng the temples of freedom, and renew their oaths of fealty to independence; while Holland, our once sister republic, is erased from the catalogue of nations; while Venice is destroyed, Italy ravaged, and Switzerland — the once happy, the once united, the once flourishing Switzerland — lies bleeding at every pore!”

He need not have been ashamed of this speech, despite the lumbering bombast of some of its sentences. All that made him estimable as a public man is contained in it, — the sentiment of nationality, and a clear sense of the only means by which the United States can remain a nation; namely, strict fidelity to the Constitution as interpreted by the authority itself cre-

ates, and modified in the way itself appoints. We have never read the production of a youth which was more prophetic of the man than this. It was young New England that spoke through him on that occasion; and in all the best part of his life he never touched a strain which New England had not inspired, or could not reach.

His success at college giving him ascendancy at home, he employed it for the benefit of his brother in a manner which few sons would have dared, and no son ought to attempt. His father, now advanced in years, infirm, "an old man before his time" through hardship and toil, much in debt, depending chiefly upon his salary of four hundred dollars a year as Judge of the Court of Common Pleas, and heavily taxed to maintain Daniel in college, had seen all his other sons married and settled except Ezekiel, upon whom he leaned as the staff of his declining years, and the main dependence of his wife and two maiden daughters. Nevertheless, Daniel, after a whole night of consultation with his brother, urged the old man to send Ezekiel to college also. The fond and generous father replied, that he had but little property, and it would take all that little to carry another son through college to a profession; but he lived only for his children, and, for his own part, he was willing to run the risk; but there was the mother and two unmarried sisters, to whom the risk was far more serious. If they consented, he was willing. The mother said: "I have lived long in the world, and have been happy in my children. If Daniel and Ezekiel will promise to take care of me in my old age, I will consent to the sale of all our property at once, and they may enjoy the benefit of that which remains after our debts are paid." Upon hearing this, all the family, we are told, were dissolved in tears, and the old man gave his assent. This seems hard,—two stout and vigorous young men willing to risk their aged parents' home and dignity for such a purpose, or for any purpose! In the early days, however, there was a singular unity of feeling and interest in a good New England family, and there were opportunities for professional men which rendered the success of two such lads as these nearly certain, if they lived to establish themselves. Nevertheless, it was too much to ask, and more than Daniel Web-

ster would have asked if he had been properly alive to the rights of others. Ezekiel shouldered his bundle, trudged off to school, where he lived and studied at the cost of one dollar a week, worked his way to the position of the second lawyer in New Hampshire, and would early have gone to Congress but for his stanch, inflexible Federalism.

Daniel Webster, schoolmaster and law-student, was assuredly one of the most interesting of characters. Pinched by poverty, as he tells us, till his very bones ached, eking out his income by a kind of labor that he always loathed (copying deeds), his shoes letting in, not water merely, but "pebbles and stones,"—father, brother, and himself sometimes all moneyless together, all dunned at the same time, and writing to one another for aid,—he was nevertheless as jovial a young fellow as any in New England. How merry and affectionate his letters to his young friends! He writes to one, soon after leaving college: "You will naturally inquire how I prosper in the article of cash; finely, finely! I came here in January with a horse, watch, etc., and a few rascally counters in my pocket. Was soon obliged to sell my horse, and live on the proceeds. Still straitened for cash, I sold my watch, and made a shift to get home, where my friends supplied me with another horse and another watch. My horse is sold again, and my watch goes, I expect, this week; thus you see how I lay up cash." How like him! To another college friend, James Hervey Bingham, whom he calls, by turns, "brother Jemmy," "Jemmy Hervey," and "Bingham," he discourses thus: "Perhaps you thought, as I did, that a dozen dollars would slide out of the pocket in a Commencement jaunt much easier than they would slide in again after you got home. That was the exact reason why I was not there. . . . I flatter myself that none of my friends ever thought me greatly absorbed in the sin of avarice; yet I assure you, Jem, that in these days of poverty I look upon a round dollar with a great deal of complacency. These rascal dollars are so necessary to the comfort of life, that next to a fine wife they are most essential, and their acquisition an object of prime importance. O Bingham, how blessed it would be to retire with a decent, clever bag of Rixes to a pleasant country town, and follow one's own inclination without

being shackled by the duties of a profession!" To the same friend, whom he now addresses as "dear Squire," he announces joyfully a wondrous piece of luck: "My expenses [to Albany] were all amply paid, and on my return I put my hand in my pocket and found one hundred and twenty dear delightfals! Is not that good luck? And these dear delightfals were, 'pon honor, all my own; yes, every dog of them!" To which we may add from another source, that they were straightway transferred to his father, to whom they were dear delightfals indeed, for he was really getting to the end of his tether.

The schoolmaster lived, it appears, on the easiest terms with his pupils, some of whom were older than himself. He tells a story of falling in with one of them on his journey to school, who was mounted "on the ugliest horse I ever saw or heard of, except Sancho Panza's pacer." The schoolmaster having two good horses, the pupil mounted one of them, strapped his bag to his own forlorn animal and drove him before, where his odd gait and frequent stumblings kept them amused. At length, arriving at a deep and rapid river, "this satire on the animal creation, as if to revenge herself on us for our sarcasms, plunged into the river, then very high by the freshet, and was wafted down the current like a bag of oats! I could hardly sit on my horse for laughter. I am apt to laugh at the vexations of my friends. The fellow, who was of my own age, and my roommate, half checked the current by oaths as big as lobsters, and the old Rosinante, who was all the while much at her ease, floated up among the willows far below on the opposite side of the river."

At the same time he was an innocent young man. If he had any wild oats in his composition, they were not sown in the days of his youth. Expecting to pass his life as a country lawyer, having scarcely a premonition of his coming renown, we find him enjoying the simple country sports and indulging in the simple village ambitions. He tried once for the captaincy of a company of militia, and was not elected; he canvassed a whole regiment to get his brother the post of adjutant, and failed. At one time he came near abandoning the law, as too high and perilous for him, and settling down as schoolmaster

and clerk of a court. The assurance of a certain six hundred dollars a year, a house, and a piece of land, with the prospect of the clerkship by and by, was so alluring to him that it required all the influence of his family and friends to make him reject the offer. Even then, in the flush and vigor of his youth, he was *led*. So was it always. He was never a leader, but always a follower. Nature made him very large, but so stinted him in propelling force, that it is doubtful if he had ever emerged from obscurity if his friends had not urged him on. His modesty in these innocent days is most touching to witness. After a long internal conflict, he resolved, in his twentieth year, to "make one more trial" at mastering the law. "If I prosecute the profession, I pray God to fortify me against its temptations. To the wind I dismiss those light hopes of eminence which ambition inspired and vanity fostered. To be 'honest, to be capable, to be faithful' to my client and my conscience, I earnestly hope will be my first endeavor." How exceedingly astonished would these affectionate young friends have been, if they could have looked forward forty years, and seen the timid law-student Secretary of State, and his ardent young comrade a clerk in his department. They seemed equals in 1802; in 1845, they had grown so far apart, that the excellent Bingham writes to Webster as to a demigod.

In these pleasant early letters of Daniel Webster there are a thousand evidences of a good heart and of virtuous habits, but not one of a superior understanding. The total absence of the sceptical spirit marks the secondary mind. For a hundred and fifty years, *no* young man of a truly eminent intellect has accepted his father's creeds without having first called them into question; and this must be so in periods of transition. The glorious light which has been coming upon Christendom for the last two hundred years, and which is now beginning to pervade the remotest provinces of it, never illumined the mind of Daniel Webster. Upon coming of age, he joined the Congregational Church, and was accustomed to open his school with an extempore prayer. He used the word "Deist" as a term of reproach; he deemed it "criminal" in Gibbon to write his fifteenth and sixteenth chapters, and spoke of that author as a "learned, proud, ingenious, foppish, vain, self-deceived man,"

who "from Protestant connections deserted to the Church of Rome, and thence to the faith of Tom Paine." And he never delivered himself from this narrowness and ignorance. In the time of his celebrity, he preferred what Sir Walter Scott called "the genteeler religion of the two," the Episcopal. In his old age, his idea of a proper sermon was incredibly narrow and provincial. He is reported to have said, late in life: —

"Many of the ministers of the present day take their text from St. Paul, and preach from the newspapers. When they do so, I prefer to enjoy my own thoughts rather than to listen. I want my pastor to come to me in the spirit of the Gospel, saying, 'You are mortal! your probation is brief; your work must be done speedily; you are immortal too. You are hastening to the bar of God; the Judge standeth before the door.' When I am thus admonished, I have no disposition to muse or to sleep."

This does not accord with what is usually observed in our churches, where sermons of the kind which Mr. Webster extolled dispose many persons to sleep, though not to muse.

In the same unquestioning manner, he imbibed his father's political prejudices. We hear this young Federalist call the Republican party "the Jacobins," just as the reactionists and Tories of the present day speak of the present Republican party as "the radicals." It is amusing to hear him, in 1802, predict the speedy restoration to power of a party that was never again to taste its sweets. "Jacobinism and iniquity," he wrote in his twentieth year, "are so allied in signification, that the latter always follows the former, just as in grammar 'the accusative case follows the transitive verb.'" He speaks of a young friend as "too honest for a Democrat." As late as his twenty-second year, he was wholly unreconciled to Napoleon, and still wrote with truly English scorn of "Gallic tastes and Gallic principles." There is a fine burst in one of his letters of 1804, when he had been propelled by his brother to Boston to finish his law studies: —

"Jerome, the brother of the Emperor of the Gauls, is here; every day you may see him whisking along Cornhill, with the true French air, with his wife by his side. The lads say that they intend to prevail on American misses to receive company in future after the manner of Jerome's wife, that is, in bed. The gentlemen of Boston (i. e. we

Feds) treat Monsieur with cold and distant respect. They feel, and every honest man feels, indignant at seeing this lordly grasshopper, this puppet in prince's clothes, dashing through the American cities, luxuriously rioting on the property of Dutch mechanics or Swiss peasants."

This last sentence, written when he was twenty-two years old, is the first to be found in his published letters which tells anything of the fire that was latent in him. He was of slow growth ; he was forty-eight years of age before his powers had reached their full development.

When he had nearly completed his studies for the bar, he was again upon the point of abandoning the laborious career of a lawyer for a life of obscurity and ease. On this occasion, it was the clerkship of his father's court, salary fifteen hundred dollars a year, that tempted him. He jumped at the offer, which promised an immediate competency for the whole family, pinched and anxious for so many years. He had no thought but to accept it. With the letter in his hand, and triumphant joy in his face, he communicated the news to Mr. Gore, his instructor in the law ; thinking of nothing, he tells us, but of "rushing to the immediate enjoyment of the proffered office." Mr. Gore, however, exhibited a provoking coolness on the subject. He said it was very civil in the judges to offer such a compliment to a brother on the bench, and, of course, a respectful letter of acknowledgment must be sent. The glowing countenance of the young man fell at these most unexpected and unwelcome words. They were, to use his own language, "a shower-bath of ice-water." The old lawyer, observing his crestfallen condition, reasoned seriously with him, and persuaded him, against his will, to continue his preparation for the bar. At every turning-point of his life, whenever he came to a parting of the ways, one of which must be chosen and the other forsaken, he required an impulse from without to push him into the path he was to go. Except once ! Once in his long public life, he seemed to venture out alone on an unfamiliar road, and lost himself. Usually, when great powers are conferred on a man, there is also given him a strong propensity to exercise them, sufficient to carry him through all difficulties to the suitable sphere. Here, on the contrary, there was a Great Eastern with only a Cunarder's engine, and it required a tug to get the great ship round to her course.

Admitted to the bar in his twenty-third year, he dutifully went home to his father, and opened an office in a New Hampshire village near by, resolved never again to leave the generous old man while he lived. Before leaving Boston, he wrote to his friend Bingham, "If I am not earning my bread and cheese in exactly nine days after my admission, I shall certainly be a bankrupt"; — and so, indeed, it proved. With great difficulty, he "hired" eighty-five dollars as a capital to begin business with, and this great sum was immediately lost in its transit by stage. To any other young man in his situation, such a calamity would have been, for the moment, crushing; but this young man, indifferent to *meum* as to *tuum*, informs his brother that he can in no conceivable way replace the money, cannot therefore pay for the books he had bought, believes he is earning his daily bread, and as to the loss, he has "*no uneasy sensations on that account.*" He concludes his letter with an old song, beginning,

"Fol de dol, dol de dol, di dol,
I'll never make money my idol."

In the New Hampshire of 1805 there was no such thing possible as leaping at once into a lucrative practice, nor even of slowly acquiring it. A country lawyer who gained a thousand dollars a year was among the most successful, and the leader of the bar in New Hampshire could not earn two thousand. The chief employment of Daniel Webster, during the first year or two of his practice, was collecting debts due in New Hampshire to merchants in Boston. His first tin sign has been preserved to the present day, to attest by its minuteness and brevity the humble expectations of its proprietor. "D. Webster, Attorney," is the inscription it bears. The old Court-House still stands in which he conducted his first suit, before his own father as presiding judge. Old men in that part of New Hampshire were living until within these few years, who remembered well seeing this tall, gaunt, and large-eyed young lawyer rise slowly, as though scarcely able to get upon his feet, and giving to every one the impression that he would soon be obliged to sit down from mere physical weakness, and saying to his father, for the first and last time, "May it please your Honor." The sheriff of the county, who was also a Webster, used to say that he felt

ashamed to see the family represented at the bar by so lean and feeble a young man. The tradition is, that he acquitted himself so well on this occasion that the sheriff was satisfied, and clients came, with their little suits and smaller fees, in considerable numbers, to the office of D. Webster, Attorney, who thenceforth in the country round went by the name of "All-eyes." His father never heard him speak again. He lived to see Daniel in successful practice, and Ezekiel a student of law, and died in 1806, prematurely old. Daniel Webster practised three years in the country, and then, resigning his business to his brother, established himself at Portsmouth, the seaport of New Hampshire, then a place of much foreign commerce. Ezekiel had had a most desperate struggle with poverty. At one time, when the family, as Daniel observed, was "heinously unprovided," we see the much-enduring "Zeke" teaching an Academy by day, an evening school for sailors, and keeping well up with his class in college besides. But these preliminary troubles were now at an end, and both the brothers took the places won by so much toil and self-sacrifice.

Those are noble old towns on the New England coast, the commerce of which Boston swallowed up forty years ago, while it left behind many a large and liberally provided old mansion, with a family in it enriched by ventures to India and China. Strangers in Portsmouth are still struck by the largeness and elegance of the residences there, and wonder how such establishments can be maintained in a place that has little "visible means of support." It was while Portsmouth was an important seaport that Daniel Webster learned and practised law there, and acquired some note as a Federalist politician.

The once celebrated Dr. Buckminster was the minister of the Congregational church at Portsmouth then. One Sunday morning in 1808, his eldest daughter sitting alone in the minister's pew, a strange gentleman was shown into it, whose appearance and demeanor strongly arrested her attention. The slenderness of his frame, the pale yellow of his complexion, and the raven blackness of his hair, seemed only to bring out into grander relief his ample forehead, and to heighten the effect of his deep-set, brilliant eyes. At this period of his life there was an air of delicacy and refinement about his face,

joined to a kind of strength that women can admire, without fearing. Miss Buckminster told the family, when she went home from church, that there had been a remarkable person with her in the pew, — one that she was sure had “a marked character for good or evil.” A few days after, the remarkable person came to live in the neighborhood, and was soon introduced to the minister’s family as Mr. Daniel Webster, from Franklin, New Hampshire, who was about to open a law office in Portsmouth. He soon endeared himself to every person in the minister’s circle, and to no one more than to the minister himself, who, among other services, taught him the art of preserving his health. The young man, like the old clergyman, was an early riser, up with the dawn in summer, and long before the dawn in winter; and both were out of doors with the sun, each at one end of a long saw, cutting wood for an appetite. The joyous, uncouth singing and shouting of the new-comer aroused the late sleepers. Then in to breakfast, where the homely, captivating humor of the young lawyer kept the table in a roar, and detained every inmate. “Never was there such an actor lost to the stage,” Jeremiah Mason, his only rival at the New Hampshire bar, used to say, “as he would have made.” Returning in the afternoon from court, fatigued and languid, his spirits rose again with food and rest, and the evening was another festival of conversation and reading. A few months after his settlement at Portsmouth he visited his native hills, saying nothing respecting the object of his journey; and returned with a wife, — that gentle and high-bred lady, a clergyman’s daughter, who was the chief source of the happiness of his happiest years, and the mother of all his children. He improved in health, his form expanded, his mind grew, his talents ripened, his fame spread, during the nine years of his residence at this thriving and pleasant town.

At Portsmouth, too, he had precisely that external stimulus to exertion which his large and pleasure-loving nature needed. Jeremiah Mason was, literally speaking, the giant of the American bar, for he stood six feet seven inches in his stockings. Like Webster, he was the son of a valiant Revolutionary officer; like Webster, he was an hereditary Federalist; like Webster,

he had a great mass of brain : but his mind was more active and acquisitive than Webster's, and his nineteen years of arduous practice at the bar had stored his memory with knowledge and given him dexterity in the use of it. Nothing shows the eminence of Webster's talents more than this, that, very early in his Portsmouth career, he should have been regarded at the bar of New Hampshire as the man to be employed against Jeremiah Mason, and his only fit antagonist. Mason was a vigilant, vigorous opponent, — sure to be well up in the law and the facts of a cause, sure to detect a flaw in the argument of opposing counsel. It was in keen encounters with this wary and learned man that Daniel Webster learned his profession ; and this he always acknowledged. “ If,” he said once in conversation, — “ if anybody thinks I am somewhat familiar with the law on some points, and should be curious to know how it happened, tell him that Jeremiah Mason compelled me to study it. *He* was my master.” It is honorable, too, to both of them, that, rivals as they were, they were fast and affectionate friends, each valuing in the other the qualities in which he was surpassed by him, and each sincerely believing that the other was the first man of his time and country. “ They say,” in Portsmouth, that Mason did not shrink from remonstrating with his friend upon his carelessness with regard to money ; but, finding the habit inveterate and the man irresistible, desisted. Webster himself says that two thousand dollars a year was all that the best practice in New Hampshire could be made to yield ; and that that was inadequate to the support of his family of a wife and three little children. Two thousand dollars in Portsmouth, in 1812, was certainly equal, in purchasing power, to six thousand of the ineffectual things that now pass by the name of dollars ; and upon such an income large families in a country town contrive to live, ride, and save.

He was a strenuous Federalist at Portsmouth, took a leading part in the public meetings of the party, and won great distinction as its frequent Fourth-of-July orator. All those mild and economical measures by which Mr. Jefferson sought to keep the United States from being drawn into the roaring vortex of the great wars in Europe, he opposed, and favored the policy of preparing the country for defence, not by gunboats and em-

bargoes, but by a powerful navy of frigates and ships of the line. His Fourth-of-July orations, if we may judge of them by the fragments that have been found, show that his mind had strengthened more than it had advanced. His style wonderfully improved from eighteen to twenty-five; and he tells us himself why it did. He discovered, he says, that the value, as well as the force, of a sentence, depends chiefly upon its meaning, not its language; and that great writing is that in which much is said in few words, and those words the simplest that will answer the purpose. Having made this notable discovery, he became a great eraser of adjectives, and toiled after simplicity and directness. Mr. Everett quotes a few sentences from his Fourth-of-July oration of 1806, when he was twenty-four, which shows an amazing advance upon the effort of his eighteenth year, quoted above:—

“Nothing is plainer than this: if we will have commerce, we must protect it. This country is commercial as well as agricultural. *Indissoluble bonds connect him who ploughs the land with him who ploughs the sea.* Nature has placed us in a situation favorable to commercial pursuits, and no government can alter the destination. Habits confirmed by two centuries are not to be changed. An immense portion of our property is on the waves. Sixty or eighty thousand of our most useful citizens are there, and are entitled to such protection from the government as their case requires.”

How different this compact directness from the tremendous fulmination of the Dartmouth junior, who said:—

“Columbia stoops not to tyrants; her spirit will never cringe to France; neither a supercilious, five-headed Directory nor the gasconading pilgrim of Egypt will ever dictate terms to sovereign America. The thunder of our cannon shall insure the performance of our treaties, and fulminate destruction on Frenchmen, till the ocean is *crimsoned with blood and gorged with pirates!*”

The Fourth-of-July oration, which afterwards fell into some disrepute, had great importance in the earlier years of the Republic, when Revolutionary times and perils were fresh in the recollection of the people. The custom arose of assigning this duty to young men covetous of distinction, and this led in time to the flighty rhetoric which made sounding emptiness and a Fourth-of-July oration synonymous terms. The feeling that

was real and spontaneous in the sons of Revolutionary soldiers was sometimes feigned or exaggerated in the young law students of the next generation, who had merely read the history of the Revolution. But with all the faults of those compositions, they were eminently serviceable to the country. We believe that to them is to be attributed a considerable part of that patriotic feeling which, after a suspended animation of several years, awoke in the spring of 1861 and asserted itself with such unexpected power, and which sustained the country during four years of a peculiarly disheartening war. How pleasant and spirit-stirring was a celebration of the Fourth of July as it was conducted in Webster's early day ! We trust the old customs will be revived and improved upon, and become universal. Nor is it any objection to the practice of having an oration, that the population is too large to be reached in that way ; for if only a thousand hear, a million may read. Nor ought we to object if the orator *is* a little more flowery and boastful than becomes an ordinary occasion. There is a time to exult ; there is a time to abandon ourselves to pleasant recollections and joyous hopes. Therefore, we say, let the young men reappear upon the platform, and show what metal they are made of by giving the best utterance they can to the patriotic feelings of the people on the national anniversary. The Republic is safe so long as we celebrate that day in the spirit of 1776 and 1861.

At least we may assert that it was Mr. Webster's Fourth-of-July orations, of which he delivered five in eleven years, that first made him known to the people of New Hampshire. At that period the two political parties could not unite in the celebration of the day, and accordingly the orations of Mr. Webster had much in them that could be agreeable only to Federalists. He was an occasional speaker, too, in those years, at meetings of Federalists, where his power as an orator was sometimes exerted most effectively. No speaker could be better adapted to a New England audience, accustomed from of old to weighty, argumentative sermons, delivered with deliberate, unimpassioned earnestness. There are many indications that a speech by Daniel Webster in Portsmouth in 1810 excited as much expectation and comment as a speech by the same person in the Senate twenty years after. But he was a mere Federal-

ist partisan, — no more. It does not appear that he had anything to offer to his countrymen beyond the stately expression of party issues ; and it was as a Federalist, pure and simple, that he was elected, in 1812, a member of the House of Representatives, after a keenly contested party conflict. His majority over the Republican candidate was 2,546, — the whole number of voters being 34,648.

The Federalists, from 1801 to 1825, were useful to the country only as an Opposition, — just as the present Tory party in England can be only serviceable in its capacity of critic and hold-back. The Federalists under John Adams had sinned past forgiveness ; while the Republican party, strong in being right, in the ability of its chiefs, in its alliance with Southern aristocrats, and in having possession of the government, was strong also in the odium and inconsistencies of its opponents. Nothing could shake the confidence of the people in the administration of Thomas Jefferson. But the stronger a party is, the more it needs an Opposition, — as we saw last winter in Washington, when the minority was too insignificant in numbers and ability to keep the too powerful majority from doing itself such harm as might have been fatal to it but for the President's well-timed antics. Next to a sound and able majority, the great need of a free country is a vigorous, vigilant, audacious, numerous minority. Better a factious and unscrupulous minority than none at all. The Federalists, who could justly claim to have among them a very large proportion of the rich men and the educated men of the country, performed the humble but useful service of keeping an eye upon the measures of the administration, and finding fault with every one of them. Daniel Webster, however, was wont to handle only the large topics. While Mr. Jefferson was struggling to keep the peace with Great Britain, he censured the policy as timorous, costly, and ineffectual ; but when Mr. Madison declared war against that power, he deemed the act unnecessary and rash. His opposition to the war was never carried to the point of giving aid and comfort to the enemy ; it was such an opposition as patriotic " War Democrats " exhibited during the late Rebellion, who thought the war might have been avoided, and ought to be conducted more vigorously, but nevertheless stood by their country without a shadow of swerving.

He could boast, too, that from his boyhood to the outbreak of the war he had advocated the building of the very ships which gave the infant nation its first taste of warlike glory. The Republicans of that time, forgetful of what Paul Jones and others of Dr. Franklin's captains had done in the war of the Revolution, supposed that, because England had a thousand ships in commission, and America only seventeen, therefore an American ship could not venture out of a harbor without being taken. We have often laughed at Colonel Benton's ludicrous confession of his own terrors on this subject.

"Political men," he says, "believed nothing could be done at sea but to lose the few vessels which we had; that even cruising was out of the question. Of our seventeen vessels, the whole were in port but one; and it was determined to keep them there, and the one at sea with them, if it had the luck to get in. I am under no obligation to make the admission, but I am free to acknowledge that I was one of those who supposed that there was no salvation for our seventeen men-of-war but to run them as far up the creek as possible, place them under the guns of batteries, and collect camps of militia about them to keep off the British. This was the policy at the day of the declaration of the war; and I have the less concern to admit myself to have been participator in the delusion, because I claim the merit of having profited from experience, — happy if I could transmit the lesson to posterity. Two officers came to Washington, — Bainbridge and Stewart. They spoke with Mr. Madison, and urged the feasibility of cruising. One half of the whole number of the British men-of-war were under the class of frigates, consequently no more than matches for some of our seventeen; the whole of her merchant marine (many thousands) were subject to capture. Here was a rich field for cruising; and the two officers, for themselves and brothers, boldly proposed to enter it.

"Mr. Madison had seen the efficiency of cruising and privateering, even against Great Britain, and in our then infantile condition, during the war of the Revolution; and besides was a man of sense, and amenable to judgment and reason. He listened to the two experienced and valiant officers; and without consulting Congress, which perhaps would have been a fatal consultation (for multitude of counsellors is not the counsel for *bold* decision), reversed the policy which had been resolved upon; and, in his supreme character of constitutional commander of the army and navy, ordered every ship that could cruise to get to sea as soon as possible. This I had from Mr. Monroe."

This is a curious example of the blinding effect of partisan strife, and of the absolute need of an Opposition. It was the hereditary prejudice of the Republicans against the navy, as an "aristocratic" institution, and the hereditary love of the navy cherished by the Federalists as being something stable and British, that enlivened the debates of the war. The Federalists had their way, but failed to win a partisan advantage from the fact, through their factious opposition to the military measures of the administration. Because the first attempt at the seizure of Canada had failed through the incompetency of General Hull, which no wisdom of man could have foreseen, Daniel Webster called upon the government to discontinue all further attempts on the land, and fight the war out on the sea. "Give up your futile projects of invasion," said he in 1814. "Extinguish the fires that blaze on your inland borders." "Unclench the iron grasp of your embargo." "With all the war of the enemy on your commerce, if you would cease to make war upon it yourselves, you would still have some commerce. That commerce would give you some revenue. Apply that revenue to the augmentation of your navy. That navy, in turn, will protect your commerce." In war time, however, there are *two* powers that have to do with the course of events; and very soon the enemy, by his own great scheme of invasion, decided the policy of the United States. Every port was blockaded so effectively that a pilot-boat could not safely go out of sight of land, and a frigate was captured within sight of it. These vigilant blockaders, together with the threatening armament which finally attacked New Orleans, compelled every harbor to prepare for defence, and most effectually refuted Mr. Webster's speech. The "blaze of glory" with which the war ended at New Orleans consumed all the remaining prestige of the Federalist party, once so powerful, so respectable, and so arrogant.

A member of the anti-war party during the existence of a war occupies a position which can only cease to be insignificant by the misfortunes of his country. But when we turn from the partisan to the man, we perceive that Daniel Webster was a great presence in the House, and took rank immediately with the half-dozen ablest debaters. His self-possession was perfect at all times, and at thirty-three he was still in the spring and

first lustre of his powers. His weighty and deliberate manner, the brevity, force, and point of his sentences, and the moderation of his gestures, were all in strong contrast to the flowing, loose, impassioned manner of the Southern orators, who ruled the House. It was something like coming upon a stray number of the old Edinburgh Review in a heap of novels and Ladies' Magazines. Chief-Justice Marshall, who heard his first speech, being himself a Federalist, was so much delighted to hear his own opinions expressed with such power and dignity, that he left the House, believing that this stranger from far-off New Hampshire was destined to become, as he said, "one of the very first statesmen of America, and perhaps the very first." His Washington fame gave him new *éclat* at home. He was re-elected, and came back to Congress in 1815, to aid the Federalists in preventing the young Republicans from being too Federal.

This last sentence slipped from the pen unawares ; but, ridiculous as it looks, it does actually express the position and vocation of the Federalists after the peace of 1815. Clay, Calhoun, Story, Adams, and the Republican majority in Congress, taught by the disasters of the war, as they supposed, had embraced the ideas of the old Federalist party, and were preparing to carry some of them to an extreme. The navy had no longer an enemy. The strict constructionists had dwindled to a few impracticables, headed by John Randolph. The younger Republicans were disposed to a liberal, if not to a latitudinarian construction of the Constitution. In short, they were Federalists and Hamiltonians, bank men, tariff men, internal-improvement men. Then was afforded to the country the curious spectacle of Federalists opposing the measures which had been among the rallying-cries of their party for twenty years. It was not in Daniel Webster's nature to be a leader ; it was morally impossible for him to disengage himself from party ties. This exquisite and consummate artist in oratory, who could give such weighty and brilliant expression to the feelings of his hearers and the doctrines of his party, had less originating power, whether of intellect or of will, than any other man of equal eminence that ever lived. He adhered to the fag end of the old party, until it was absorbed, unavoidably, with scarcely

an effort of its own, in Adams and Clay. From 1815 to 1825 he was in opposition, and in opposition to old Federalism revived; and, consequently, we believe that posterity will decide that his speeches of this period are the only ones relating to details of policy which have the slightest permanent value. In fact, his position in Congress, as a member of a very small band of Federalists who had no hope of regaining power, was the next thing to being independent, and he made an excellent use of his advantage.

That Bank of the United States, for example, of which, in 1832, he was the ablest defender, and for a renewal of which he strove for ten years, he voted *against* in 1816; and for reasons which neither he nor any other man ever refuted. His speeches criticising the various bank schemes of 1815 and 1816 were serviceable to the public, and made the bank, as finally established, less harmful than it might have been.

So of the tariff. On this subject, too, he always followed, — never led. So long as there was a Federal party, he, as a member of it, opposed Mr. Clay's protective, or (as Mr. Clay delighted to term it) "American system." When, in 1825, the few Federalists in the House voted for Mr. Adams, and were merged in the "conservative wing" of the Republican party, which became, in time, the Whig party, then, and from that time forward to the end of his life, he was a protectionist. His anti-protection speech of 1824 is wholly in the modern spirit, and takes precisely the ground since taken by Ricardo, John Stuart Mill, and others of the new school. It is so excellent a statement of the true policy of the United States with regard to protection, that we have often wondered it has been allowed to sleep so long in the tomb of his works. And, oh! from what evils might we have been spared, — nullification, surplus-revenue embarrassments, hot-bed manufactures, clothing three times its natural price, — if the protective legislation of Congress had been inspired by the Webster of 1824, instead of the Clay! Unimportant as this great speech may now seem, as it lies uncut in the third volume of its author's speeches, its unturned leaves sticking together, yet we can say of it, that the whole course of American history had been different if its counsels had been followed. The essence of the speech is con

tained in two of its phrases : "Freedom of trade, the general principle ; restriction, the exception." Free trade, the object to be aimed at ; protection, a temporary expedient. Free trade, the interest of all nations ; protection, the occasional necessity of one. Free trade, the final and universal good ; protection, the sometimes necessary evil. Free trade, as soon as possible and as complete as possible ; protection, as little as possible and as short as possible.

The speech was delivered in reply to Mr. Clay ; and, viewed merely *as* a reply, it is difficult to conceive of one more triumphant. Mr. Webster was particularly happy in turning Mr. Clay's historical illustrations against him, especially those drawn from the history of the English silk manufacture, and the Spanish system of restriction and prohibition. Admitting fully that manufactures the most unsuited to the climate, soil, and genius of a country *could* be created by protection, he showed that such manufactures were not, upon the whole, and in the long run, a benefit to a country ; and adduced, for an illustration, the very instance cited by Mr. Clay, — the silk manufacture of England, — which kept fifty thousand persons in misery, and necessitated the continuance of a kind of legislation which the intelligence of Great Britain had outgrown. Is not the following brief passage an almost exhaustive statement of the true American policy ?

"I know it would be very easy to promote manufactures, at least for a time, but probably for a short time only, if we might act in disregard of other interests. We *could* cause a sudden transfer of capital and a violent change in the pursuits of men. We *could* exceedingly benefit some classes by these means. But what then becomes of the interests of others ? The power of collecting revenue by duties on imports, and the habit of the government of collecting almost its whole revenue in that mode, will enable us, without exceeding the bounds of moderation, to give great advantages to those classes of manufactures which we may think most useful to promote at home."

One of his happy retorts upon Mr. Clay was the following : —

"I will be so presumptuous as to take up a challenge which Mr. Speaker has thrown down. He has asked us, in a tone of interrogatory indicative of the feeling of anticipated triumph, to mention any country

in which manufactures have flourished without the aid of prohibitory laws. . . . Sir, I am ready to answer this inquiry.

“There is a country, not undistinguished among the nations, in which the progress of manufactures has been more rapid than in any other, and yet unaided by prohibitions or unnatural restrictions. That country, the happiest which the sun shines on, is our own.”

Again, Mr. Clay had made the rash remark that it would cost the nation, *as a nation*, nothing to convert our ore into iron. Mr. Webster’s reply to this seems to us eminently worthy of consideration at the present moment, and at every moment when the tariff is a topic of debate.

“I think,” said he, “it would cost us precisely what we can least afford, that is, *great labor*. . . . Of manual labor no nation has more than a certain quantity; nor can it be increased at will. . . . A most important question for every nation, as well as for every individual, to propose to itself, is, how it can best apply that quantity of labor which it is able to perform. . . . Now, with respect to the quantity of labor, as we all know, different nations are differently circumstanced. Some need, more than anything, work for hands; *others require hands for work*; and if we ourselves are not absolutely in the latter class, we are still, most fortunately, very near it.”

The applicability of these observations to the present condition of affairs in the United States — labor very scarce, and protectionists clamoring to make it scarcer — must be apparent to every reader.

But this was the last of Mr. Webster’s efforts in behalf of the freedom of trade. In the spring of 1825, when it devolved upon the House of Representatives to elect a President, the few Federalists remaining in the House became, for a few days, an important body. Mr. Webster had an hereditary love for the house of Adams; and the aged Jefferson himself had personally warned him against Andrew Jackson. Webster it was who, in an interview with Mr. Adams, obtained such assurances as determined the Federalists to give their vote for the New England candidate; and thus terminated the existence of the great party which Hamilton had founded, with which Washington had sympathized, which had ruled the country for twelve years, and maintained a vigorous and useful opposition for a quarter of a century. Daniel Webster was in opposition

no longer. He was a defender of the administration of Adams and Clay, supported all their important measures, and voted for, nay, advocated, the Tariff Bill of 1828, which went far beyond that of 1824 in its protective provisions. Taunted with such a remarkable and sudden change of opinion, he said that, New England having been compelled by the act of 1824 to transfer a large part of her capital from commerce to manufactures, he was bound, as her representative, to demand the continuance of the system. Few persons, probably, who heard him give this reason for his conversion, believed it was the true one; and few will ever believe it who shall intimately know the transactions of that winter in Washington. But if it *was* the true reason, Mr. Webster, in giving it, ruled himself out of the rank of the Great, — who, in every age and land, lead, not follow, their generation. In his speech of 1824 he objects to the protective system on *general* principles, applicable to every case not clearly exceptional; and the further Congress was disposed to carry an erroneous system, the more was he bound to lift up his voice against it. It seems to us that, when he abandoned the convictions of his own mind and took service under Mr. Clay, he descended (to use the fine simile of the author of “Felix Holt”) from the rank of heroes to that of the multitude for whom heroes fight. He was a protectionist, thenceforth, as long as he lived. If he was right in 1824, how wrong he was in 1846! In 1824 he pointed to the high wages of American mechanics as a proof that the protective system was unnecessary; and he might have quoted Adam Smith to show that, in 1770, wages in the Colonies were just as high, compared with wages in Europe, as in 1824. In 1846 he attributed high wages in America to the operation of the protective system. In 1824 free trade was the good, and restriction the evil; in 1846 restriction was the good, and free trade the evil.

Practical wisdom, indeed, was not in this man. He was not formed to guide, but to charm, impress, and rouse mankind. His advocacy of the Greek cause, in 1824, events have shown to be unwise; but his speech on this subject contains some passages so exceedingly fine, noble, and harmonious, that we do not believe they have ever been surpassed in extempore speech by

any man but himself. The passage upon Public Opinion, for example, is always read with delight, even by those who can call to mind the greatest number of instances of its apparent untruth.

“The time has been, indeed, when fleets, and armies, and subsidies were the principal reliances, even in the best cause. But, happily for mankind, a great change has taken place in this respect. Moral causes come into consideration in proportion as the progress of knowledge is advanced; and the public opinion of the civilized world is rapidly gaining an ascendancy over mere brutal force. . . . It may be silenced by military power, but it cannot be conquered. It is elastic, irrepressible, and invulnerable to the weapons of ordinary warfare. It is that impassible, unextinguishable enemy of mere violence and arbitrary rule, which, like Milton’s angels,

‘Vital in every part, . . .

Cannot, but by annihilating, die.’

Until this be propitiated or satisfied, it is vain for power to talk either of triumphs or of repose. No matter what fields are desolated, what fortresses surrendered, what armies subdued, or what provinces overrun. . . . There is an enemy that still exists to check the glory of these triumphs. It follows the conqueror back to the very scene of his ovations; it calls upon him to take notice that Europe, though silent, is yet indignant; it shows him that the sceptre of his victory is a barren sceptre; that it shall confer neither joy nor honor, but shall moulder to dry ashes in his grasp. In the midst of his exultation, it pierces his ear with the cry of injured justice; it denounces against him the indignation of an enlightened and civilized age; it turns to bitterness the cup of his rejoicing, and wounds him with the sting which belongs to the consciousness of having outraged the opinion of mankind.”—*Works*, Vol. III. pp. 77, 78.

Yes: if the conqueror had the moral feeling which inspired this passage, and if the cry of injured justice could pierce the flattering din of office-seekers surrounding him. But, reading the paragraph as the expression of a *hope* of what may one day be, how grand and consoling it is! The information given in this fine oration respecting the condition of Greece and the history of her struggle for independence was provided for him by the industry of his friend, Edward Everett.

One of the minor triumphs of Mr. Webster’s early Congressional life was his conquest of the heart of John Randolph. In

the course of a debate on the sugar tax, in 1816, Mr. Webster had the very common fortune of offending the irascible member from Virginia, and Mr. Randolph, as his custom was, demanded an explanation of the offensive words. Explanation was refused by the member from Massachusetts; whereupon Mr. Randolph demanded "the satisfaction which his insulted feelings required." Mr. Webster's reply to this preposterous demand was everything that it ought to have been. He told Mr. Randolph that he had no right to an explanation, and that the temper and style of the demand were such as to forbid its being conceded as a matter of courtesy. He denied, too, the right of any man to call him to the field for what he might please to consider an insult to his feelings, although he should be "always prepared to repel in a suitable manner the aggression of any man who may presume upon such a refusal." The eccentric Virginian was so much pleased with Mr. Webster's bearing upon this occasion, that he manifested a particular regard for him, and pronounced him a very able man for a Yankee.

It was during these years that Daniel Webster became dear, beyond all other men of his time, to the people of New England. Removing to Boston in 1816, and remaining out of Congress for some years, he won the first place at the New England bar, and a place equal to the foremost at the bar of the Supreme Court of the United States. Not one of his legal arguments has been exactly reported, and some of the most important of them we possess merely in outline; but in such reports as we have, the weight and clearness of his mind are abundantly apparent. In almost every argument of his, there can be found digressions which relieve the strained attention of the bench, and please the unlearned hearer; and he had a happy way of suddenly crystallizing his argument into one luminous phrase, which often seemed to prove his case by merely stating it. Thus, in the Dartmouth College case, he made a rare display of learning (furnished him by associate counsel, he tells us); but his argument is concentrated in two of his simplest sentences:— 1. The endowment of a college is private property; 2. The charter of a college is that which constitutes its endowment private property. The Supreme Court accepted these two prop-

ositions, and thus secured to every college in the country its right to its endowment. This seems too simple for argument, but it cost a prodigious and powerfully contested lawsuit to reduce the question to this simplicity; and it was Webster's large, calm, and discriminating glance which detected these two fundamental truths in the mountain mass of testimony, argument, and judicial decision. In arguing the great steamboat case, too, he displayed the same qualities of mind. New York having granted to Livingston and Fulton the exclusive right to navigate her waters by steamboats, certain citizens of New Jersey objected, and, after a fierce struggle upon the waters themselves, transferred the contest to the Supreme Court. Mr. Webster said: "The commerce of the United States, under the Constitution of 1787, is a unit," and "what we call the waters of the State of New York are, for the purposes of navigation and commerce, the waters of the United States"; therefore no State can grant exclusive privileges. The Supreme Court affirmed this to be the true doctrine, and thenceforth Captain Cornelius Vanderbilt ran his steamboat without feeling it necessary, on approaching New York, to station a lady at the helm and to hide himself in the hold. Along with this concentrating power, Mr. Webster possessed, as every school-boy knows, a fine talent for amplification and narrative. His narration of the murder of Captain White was almost enough of itself to hang a man.

But it was not his substantial services to his country which drew upon him the eyes of all New England, and made him dear to every son of the Pilgrims. In 1820, the Pilgrim Society of Plymouth celebrated the anniversary of the landing of their forefathers in America. At the dinner of the Society, that day, every man found beside his plate five kernels of corn, to remind him of the time when that was the daily allowance of the settlers, and it devolved upon Daniel Webster to show how worthy they were of better fare. His address on this anniversary is but an amplification of his Junior Fourth-of-July oration of 1800; but what an amplification! It differed from that youthful essay as the first flights of a young eagle, from branch to branch upon its native tree, differ from the sweep of his wings when he takes a continent in his flight, and swings from moun-

tain range to mountain range. We are aware that eulogy is, of all the kinds of composition, the easiest to execute in a tolerable manner. What Mr. Everett calls "patriotic eloquence" should usually be left to persons who are in the gushing time of life; for when men address men, they should say something, clear up something, help forward something, accomplish something. It is not becoming in a full-grown man to utter melodious wind. Nevertheless, it can be truly said of this splendid and irresistible oration, that it carries that kind of composition as far as we can ever expect to see it carried, even in this its native land. What a triumphant joy it must have been to an audience, accustomed for three or four generations to regard preaching as the noblest work of man, keenly susceptible to all the excellences of uttered speech, and who now heard their plain old fathers and grandfathers praised in such massive and magnificent English! Nor can it be said that this speech says nothing. In 1820 it was still part of the industry of New England to fabricate certain articles required by slave-traders in their hellish business; and there were still descendants of the Pilgrims who were actually engaged in the traffic.

"If there be," exclaimed the orator, "within the extent of our knowledge or influence, any participation in this traffic, let us pledge ourselves here, upon the rock of Plymouth, to extirpate and destroy it. It is not fit that the land of the Pilgrims should bear the shame longer. I hear the sound of the hammer, I see the smoke of the furnaces where manacles and fetters are still forged for human limbs. I see the visages of those who by stealth and at midnight labor in this work of hell, foul and dark, as may become the artificers of such instruments of misery and torture. Let that spot be purified, or let it cease to be of New England."—*Works*, Vol. I. pp. 45, 46.

And he proceeds, in language still more energetic, to call upon his countrymen to purge their land of this iniquity. This oration, widely circulated through the press, gave the orator universal celebrity in the Northern States, and was one of the many causes which secured his continuance in the national councils.

Such was his popularity in Boston, that, in 1824, he was re-elected to Congress by 4,990 votes out of 5,000; and such was his celebrity in his profession, that his annual retainers from

banks, insurance companies, and mercantile firms yielded an income that would have satisfied most lawyers even of great eminence. Those were not the times of five-thousand-dollar fees. As late as 1819, as we see in Mr. Webster's books, he gave "advice" in important cases for twenty dollars; his regular retaining fee was fifty dollars; his "annual retainer," one hundred dollars; his whole charge for conducting a cause rarely exceeded five hundred dollars; and the income of a whole year averaged about twenty thousand dollars. Twenty years later, he has gained a larger sum than that by the trial of a single cause; but in 1820 such an income was immense, and probably not exceeded by that of any other American lawyer. Most lawyers in the United States, he once said, "live well, work hard, and die poor"; and this is particularly likely to be the case with lawyers who spend six months of the year in Congress.

Northern members of Congress, from the foundation of the government, have usually gratified their ambition only by the sacrifice of their interests. The Congress of the United States, modelled upon the Parliament of Great Britain, finds in the North no suitable class of men who can afford to be absent from their affairs half the year. We should naturally choose to be represented in Washington by men distinguished in their several spheres; but in the North, almost all such persons are so involved in business that they cannot accept a seat in Congress, except at the peril of their fortune; and this inconvenience is aggravated by the habits that prevail at the seat of government. In the case of a lawyer like Daniel Webster, who has a large practice in the Supreme Court, the difficulty is diminished, because he can usually attend the court without seriously neglecting his duties in Congress,—usually, but not always. There was one year in the Congressional life of Mr. Webster when he was kept out of the Supreme Court for four months by the high duty that devolved upon him of refuting Calhoun's nullification subtleties; but even in that year, his professional income was more than seven thousand dollars; and he ought by that time, after thirty years of most successful practice, to have been independent of his profession. He was not, however; and never would have been, if he had practised a century. Those habits of profusion, that reckless disregard

of pecuniary considerations, of which we noticed indications in his early days, seemed to be part of his moral constitution. He never appeared to know how much money he had, nor how much he owed ; and, what was worse, he never appeared to care. He was a profuse giver and a careless payer. It was far easier for him to send a hundred-dollar note in reply to a begging letter, than it was to discharge a long-standing account ; and when he had wasted his resources in extravagant and demoralizing gifts, he deemed it a sufficient answer to a presented bill to ask his creditor how a man could pay money who had none.

It is not true, therefore, that the frequent embarrassments of his later years were due to the loss of practice by his attendance in Congress ; because, in the years when his professional gains were smallest, his income was large enough for the wants of any reasonable man. Nevertheless, we cannot deny that when, in 1827, by his acceptance of a seat in the Senate, he gave himself permanently to public life, he made a sacrifice of his pecuniary interests which, for a man of such vast requirements and uncalculating habits, was very great.

But his reward was also very great. On that elevated theatre he soon found an opportunity for the display of his talents, which, while it honored and served his country, rendered him the foremost man in that part of it where such talents as his could be appreciated.

All wars of which we have any knowledge have consisted of two parts : first, a war of words ; secondly, the conflict of arms. The war of words which issued in the late Rebellion began, in 1828, by the publication of Mr. Calhoun's first paper upon Nullification, called the South Carolina Exposition ; and it ended in April, 1861, when President Lincoln issued his call for seventy-five thousand troops, which excited so much merri-ment at Montgomery. This was a period of thirty-three years, during which every person in the United States who could use either tongue or pen joined in the strife of words, and contributed his share either toward hastening or postponing the final appeal to the sword. Men fight with one another, says Dr. Franklin, because they have not sense enough to settle their disputes in any other way ; and when once they have begun,

never stop killing one another as long as they have money enough "to pay the butchers." So it appeared in our case. Of all the men who took part in this preliminary war of words, Daniel Webster was incomparably the ablest. He seemed charged with a message and a mission to the people of the United States; and almost everything that he said in his whole life of real value has reference to that message and that mission. The necessity of the Union of these States, the nature of the tie that binds them together, the means by which alone that tie can be kept strong, — this was what he came charged to impart to us; and when he had fully delivered this message, he had done his work. His numberless speeches upon the passing questions of the day, — tariff, Bank, currency, Sub-treasury, and the rest, — in which the partisan spoke rather than the man, may have had their value at the time, but there is little in them of durable worth. Those of them which events have not refuted, time has rendered obsolete. No general principles are established in them which can be applied to new cases. Indeed, he used often to assert that there *were* no general principles in practical statesmanship, but that the government of nations is, and must be, a series of expedients. Several times, in his published works, can be found the assertion, that there is no such thing as a science of political economy, though he says he had "turned over" all the authors on that subject from Adam Smith to his own time. It is when he speaks of the Union and the Constitution, and when he is rousing the sentiment of nationality, that he utters, not, indeed, eternal truths, but truths necessary to the existence of the United States, and which can only become obsolete when the nation is no more.

The whole of his previous life had been an unconscious preparation for these great debates. It was one of the recollections of his childhood, that, in his eighth year, he had bought a handkerchief upon which was printed the Constitution of 1787, which he then read through; and while he was a farmer's boy at home, the great question of its acceptance or rejection had been decided. His father's party was the party for the Constitution, whose only regret concerning it was, that it was not so much of a constitution as they wished it to be. The Repub-

licans dwelt upon its defects and dangers ; the Federalists, upon its advantages and beauties : so that all that this receptive lad heard of it at his father's fireside was of its value and necessity. We see in his youthful orations that nothing in the history of the continent struck his imagination so powerfully as the spectacle of thirty-eight gentlemen meeting in a quiet city, and peacefully settling the terms of a national union between thirteen sovereign States, most of which gave up, voluntarily, what the sword alone was once supposed capable of extorting. In all his orations on days of national festivity or mourning, we observe that his weightiest eulogy falls upon those who were conspicuous in this great business. Because Hamilton aided in it, he revered his memory ; because Madison was its best interpreter, he venerated his name and deferred absolutely to his judgment. It was clear to his mind that the President can only dismiss an officer of the government as he appoints him, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate ; but he would not permit himself to think so against Mr. Madison's decision. His own triumphs at the bar — those upon which he plumed himself — were all such as resulted from his lonely broodings over, and patient study of, the Constitution of his country. A native of one of the smallest of the States, to which the Union was an unmixed benefit and called for no sacrifice of pride, he grew up into nationality without having to pass through any probation of States' rights scruples. Indeed, it was as natural for a man of his calibre to be a national man, as it is for his own Monadnock to be three thousand feet above the level of the sea.

The South Carolina Exposition of 1828 appeared to fall still-born from the press. Neither General Jackson nor any of his nearest friends seem to have been so much as aware of its existence ; certainly they attached no importance to it. Colonel Benton assures us, that to him the Hayne debate, so far as it related to constitutional questions, seemed a mere oratorical display, without adequate cause or object ; and we know that General Jackson, intimately allied with the Hayne family and strongly attached to Colonel Hayne himself, wished him success in the debate, and heard with regret that Mr. Webster was "demolishing" him. Far, indeed, was any one from supposing

that a movement had been set on foot which was to end only with the total destruction of the "interest" sought to be protected by it. Far was any one from foreseeing that so poor and slight a thing as the Exposition was the beginning of forty years of strife. It is evident from the Banquo passage of Mr. Webster's principal speech, when, looking at Vice-President Calhoun, he reminded that ambitious man that, in joining the coalition which made Jackson President, he had only given Van Buren a push toward the Presidency,—“No son of *theirs* succeeding,”—it is evident, we say, from this passage, and from other covert allusions, that he understood the game of Nullification from the beginning, so far as its objects were personal. But there is no reason for supposing that he attached importance to it before that memorable afternoon in December, 1830, when he strolled from the Supreme Court into the Senate-Chamber, and chanced to hear Colonel Hayne reviling New England, and repeating the doctrines of the South Carolina Exposition.

Every one knows the story of this first triumph of the United States over its enemies. Daniel Webster, as Mr. Everett records, appeared to be the only person in Washington who was entirely at his ease; and he was so remarkably unconcerned, that Mr. Everett feared he was not aware of the expectations of the public, and the urgent necessity of his exerting all his powers. Another friend mentions, that on the day before the delivery of the principal speech the orator lay down as usual, after dinner, upon a sofa, and soon was heard laughing to himself. Being asked what he was laughing at, he said he had just thought of a way to turn Colonel Hayne's quotation about Banquo's ghost against himself, and he was going to get up and make a note of it. This he did, and then resumed his nap.

Notwithstanding these appearances of indifference, he was fully roused to the importance of the occasion; and, indeed, we have the impression that only on this occasion, in his whole life, were all his powers in full activity and his entire mass of being in full glow. But even then the artist was apparent in all that he did, and particularly in the dress which he wore. At that time, in his forty-eighth year, his hair was still as black

as an Indian's, and it lay in considerable masses about the spacious dome of his forehead. His form had neither the slenderness of his youth nor the elephantine magnitude of his later years ; it was fully, but finely, developed, imposing and stately, yet not wanting in alertness and grace. No costume could have been better suited to it than his blue coat and glittering gilt buttons, his ample yellow waistcoat, his black trousers, and snowy cravat. It was in some degree, perhaps, owing to the elegance and daintiness of his dress that, while the New England men among his hearers were moved to tears, many Southern members, like Colonel Benton, regarded the speech merely as a Fourth-of-July oration delivered on the 6th of January. Benton assures us, however, that he soon discovered his error, for the Nullifiers were not to be put down by a speech, and soon revealed themselves in their true character, as "irreconcilable" foes of the Union. This was Daniel Webster's own word in speaking of that faction in 1830, — "irreconcilable."

After this transcendent effort, — perhaps the greatest of its kind ever made by man, — Daniel Webster had nothing to gain in the esteem of the Northern States. He was indisputably our foremost man, and in Massachusetts there was no one who could be said to be second to him in the regard of the people : he was a whole species in himself. In the subsequent winter of debate with Calhoun upon the same subject, he added many details to his argument, developed it in many directions, and accumulated a great body of constitutional reasoning ; but so far as the people were concerned, the reply to Hayne sufficed. In all those debates we are struck with his colossal, his superfluous superiority to his opponents ; and we wonder how it could have been that such a man should have thought it worth while to refute such puerilities. It was, however, abundantly worth while. The assailed Constitution needed such a defender. It was necessary that the patriotic feeling of the American people, which was destined to a trial so severe, should have an unshakable basis of intelligent conviction. It was necessary that all men should be made distinctly to see that the Constitution was not a "compact" to which the States "acceded," and from which they could se-

cede, but the fundamental law, which the people had established and ordained, from which there could be no secession but by revolution. It was necessary that the country should be made to understand that Nullification and Secession were one and the same; and that to admit the first, promising to stop short at the second, was as though a man "should take the plunge of Niagara and cry out that he would stop half-way down." Mr. Webster's principal speech on this subject, delivered in 1832, has, and will ever have, with the people and the courts of the United States, the authority of a judicial decision; and it might very properly be added to popular editions of the Constitution as an appendix. Into the creation of the feeling and opinion which fought out the late war for the Union a thousand and ten thousand causes entered: every man who had ever performed a patriotic action, and every man who ever from his heart had spoken a patriotic word, contributed to its production; but to no man, perhaps, were we more indebted for it than to the Daniel Webster of 1830 and 1832.

We cannot so highly commend his votes in 1832 as his speeches. General Jackson's mode of dealing with nullification seems to us the model for every government to follow which has to deal with discontented subjects:—1. To take care that the laws are obeyed; 2. To remove the real grounds of discontent. This was General Jackson's plan. This, also, was the aim of Mr. Clay's compromise. Mr. Webster objected to both, on the ground that nullification was rebellion, and that no legislation respecting the pretext for rebellion should be entertained until the rebellion was quelled. Thus he came out of the battle, dear to the thinking people of the country, but estranged from the three political powers, — Henry Clay and his friends, General Jackson and his friends, Calhoun and his friends; and though he soon lapsed again under the leadership of Mr. Clay, there was never again a cordial union between him and any interior circle of politicians who could have gratified his ambition. Deceived by the thunders of applause which greeted him wherever he went, and the intense adulation of his own immediate circle, he thought that he too could be an independent power in politics. Two wild vagaries seemed to have haunted him ever after: first, that a man could merit the

Presidency ; secondly, that a man could get the Presidency by meriting it.

From 1832 to the end of his life it appears to us that Daniel Webster was undergoing a process of deterioration, moral and mental. His material part gained upon his spiritual. Naturally inclined to indolence, and having an enormous capacity for physical enjoyment, a great hunter, fisherman, and farmer, a lover of good wine and good dinners, a most jovial companion, his physical desires and tastes were constantly strengthened by being keenly gratified, while his mind was fed chiefly upon past acquisitions. There is nothing in his later efforts which shows any intellectual advance, nothing from which we can infer that he had been browsing in forests before untrodden, or feeding in pastures new. He once said, at Marshfield, that, if he could live three lives in one, he would like to devote them all to study,—one to geology, one to astronomy, and one to classical literature. But it does not appear that he invigorated and refreshed the old age of his mind, by doing more than glance over the great works which treat of these subjects. A new language every ten years, or a new science vigorously pursued, seems necessary to preserve the freshness of the understanding, especially when the physical tastes are superabundantly nourished. He could praise Rufus Choate for reading a little Latin and Greek every day,—and this was better than nothing,—but he did not follow his example. There is an aged merchant in New York, who has kept his mind from growing old by devoting exactly twenty minutes every day to the reading of some abstruse book, as far removed from his necessary routine of thought as he could find. Goethe's advice to every one to read every day a short poem, recognizes the danger we all incur in taking systematic care of the body and letting the soul take care of itself. During the last ten years of Daniel Webster's life, he spent many a thousand dollars upon his library, and almost ceased to be an intellectual being.

His pecuniary habits demoralized him. It was wrong and mean in him to accept gifts of money from the people of Boston ; it was wrong in them to submit to his merciless exactions. What need was there that their Senator should sometimes be a mendicant and sometimes a pauper ? If he chose to maintain

baronial state without a baron's income ; if he chose to have two fancy farms of more than a thousand acres each ; if he chose to keep two hundred prize cattle and seven hundred choice sheep for his pleasure ; if he must have about his house lamas, deer, and all rare fowls ; if his flower-garden must be one acre in extent, and his books worth thirty thousand dollars ; if he found it pleasant to keep two or three yachts and a little fleet of smaller craft ; if he could not refrain from sending money in answer to begging letters, and pleased himself by giving away to his black man money enough to buy a very good house ; and if he could not avoid adding wings and rooms to his spacious mansion at Marshfield, and must needs keep open house there and have a dozen guests at a time, — why should the solvent and careful business men of Boston have been taxed, or have taxed themselves, to pay any part of the expense ?

Mr. Lanman, his secretary, gives us this curious and contradictory account of his pecuniary habits : —

“He made money with ease, and spent it without reflection. He had accounts with various banks, and men of all parties were always glad to accommodate him with loans, if he wanted them. He kept no record of his deposits, unless it were on slips of paper hidden in his pockets ; these matters were generally left with his secretary. His notes were seldom or never regularly protested, and when they were, they caused him an immense deal of mental anxiety. When the writer has sometimes drawn a check for a couple of thousand dollars, he has not even looked at it, but packed it away in his pockets, like so much waste paper. During his long professional career, he earned money enough to make a dozen fortunes, but he spent it liberally, and gave it away to the poor by hundreds and thousands. Begging letters from women and unfortunate men were received by him almost daily, at certain periods ; and one instance is remembered where, on six successive days, he sent remittances of fifty and one hundred dollars to people with whom he was entirely unacquainted. He was indeed careless, but strictly and religiously honest, in all his money matters. He knew not how to be otherwise. The last fee which he ever received for a single legal argument was \$11,000. . . .

“A sanctimonious lady once called upon Mr. Webster, in Washington, with a long and pitiful story about her misfortunes and poverty, and asked him for a donation of money to defray her expenses to her

home in a Western city. He listened with all the patience he could manage, expressed his surprise that she should have called upon him for money simply because he was an officer of the government, and that, too, when she was a total stranger to him, reprimanded her in very plain language for her improper conduct, and *handed her a note of fifty dollars.*

“He had called upon the cashier of the bank where he kept an account, for the purpose of getting a draft discounted, when that gentleman expressed some surprise, and casually inquired why he wanted so much money? ‘To spend; to buy bread and meat,’ replied Mr. Webster, a little annoyed at this speech.

“‘But,’ returned the cashier, ‘you already have upon deposit in the bank no less than three thousand dollars, and I was only wondering why you wanted so much money.’

“This was indeed the truth, but Mr. Webster had forgotten it.”

Mr. Lanman’s assertion that Mr. Webster, with all this recklessness, was religiously honest, must have excited a grim smile upon the countenances of such of his Boston readers as had had his name upon their books. No man can be honest long who is careless in his expenditures.

It is evident from his letters, if we did not know it from other sources of information, that his carelessness with regard to the balancing of his books grew upon him as he advanced in life, and kept pace with the general deterioration of his character. In 1824, before he had been degraded by the acceptance of pecuniary aid, and when he was still a solvent person, one of his nephews asked him for a loan. He replied: “If you think you can do anything useful with a thousand dollars, you may have that sum in the spring, or sooner, if need be, on the following conditions:—1. You must give a note for it with reasonable security. 2. The interest must be payable annually, and must be paid at the day without fail. And so long as this continues to be done, the money not to be called for—the principal—under six months’ notice. I am thus explicit with you, because you wish me to be so; and because also, having a little money, and but a little, I am resolved on keeping it.” This is sufficiently business-like. He *had* a little money then,—enough, as he intimates, for the economical maintenance of his family. During the land fever of 1835 and 1836, he lost so

seriously by speculations in Western land, that he was saved from bankruptcy only by the aid of that mystical but efficient body whom he styled his "friends"; and from that time to the end of his life he was seldom at his ease. He earned immense occasional fees, — two of twenty-five thousand dollars each; he received frequent gifts of money, as well as a regular stipend from an invested capital; but he expended so profusely, that he was sometimes at a loss for a hundred dollars to pay his hay-makers; and he died forty thousand dollars in debt.

The adulation of which he was the victim at almost every hour of his existence injured and deceived him. He was continually informed that he was the greatest of living men, — the "godlike Daniel"; and when he escaped even into the interior of his home, he found there persons who sincerely believed that making such speeches as his was the greatest of all possible human achievements. All men whose talents are of the kind which enable their possessor to give intense pleasure to great multitudes are liable to this misfortune; and especially in a new and busy country, little removed from the colonial state, where intellectual eminence is rare, and the number of persons who can enjoy it is exceedingly great. We are growing out of this provincial propensity to abandon ourselves to admiration of the pleasure-giving talents. The time is at hand, we trust, when we shall not be struck with wonder because a man can make a vigorous speech, or write a good novel, or play Hamlet decently, and when we shall be able to enjoy the talent without adoring the man. The talent is one thing, and the man another; the talent may be immense, and the man little; the speech powerful and wise, the speaker weak and foolish. Daniel Webster came at last to loathe this ceaseless incense, but it was when his heart was set upon homage of another kind, which he was destined never to enjoy.

Another powerful cause of his deterioration was the strange, strong, always increasing desire he had to be President. Any intelligent politician, outside of the circle of his own "friends," could have told him, and proved to him, that he had little more chance of being elected President than the most insignificant man in the Whig party. And the marvel is, that he himself should not have known it, — he who knew why, precisely why,

every candidate had been nominated, from Madison to General Taylor. In the teeth of all the facts, he still cherished the amazing delusion that the Presidency of the United States, like the Premiership of England, is the natural and just reward of long and able public service. The Presidency, on the contrary, is not merely an accident, but it is an accident of the last moment. It is a game too difficult for mortal faculties to play, because some of the conditions of success are as uncertain as the winds, and as ungovernable. If dexterous playing could have availed, Douglas would have carried off the stakes, for he had an audacious and a mathematical mind ; while the winning man in 1856 was a heavy player, devoid of skill, whose decisive advantage was that he had been out of the game for four years. Mr. Seward, too, was within an ace of winning, when an old quarrel between two New York editors swept his cards from the table.

No : the President of the United States is not prime minister, but chief magistrate, and he is subject to that law of nature which places at the head of regular governments more or less respectable Nobodies. In Europe this law of nature works through the hereditary principle, and in America through universal suffrage. In all probability, we shall usually elect a person of the non-committal species, — one who will have lived fifty or sixty years in the world without having formed an offensive conviction or uttered a striking word, — one who will have conducted his life as those popular periodicals are conducted, in which there are “no allusions to politics or religion.” And may not this be part of the exquisite economy of nature, which ever strives to get into each place the smallest man that can fill it ? How miserably out of place would be a man of active, originating, disinterested spirit, at the head of a strictly limited, constitutional government, such as ours is in time of peace, in which the best President is he who does the least ? Imagine a live man thrust out over the bows of a ship, and compelled to stand as figure-head, lashed by the waves and winds during a four years’ voyage, and expected to be pleased with his situation because he is guilt !

Daniel Webster so passionately desired the place, that he could never see how far he was from the possibility of getting

it. He was not such timber as either Southern fire-eaters or Northern wire-pullers had any use for ; and a melancholy sight it was, this man, once so stately, paying court to every passing Southerner, and personally begging delegates to vote for him. He was not made for that. An elephant does sometimes stand upon his head and play a barrel organ, but every one who sees the sorry sight sees also that it was not the design of Nature that elephants should do such things.

A Marshfield elm may be for half a century in decay without exhibiting much outward change ; and when, in some tempestuous night, half its bulk is torn away, the neighborhood notes with surprise that what seemed solid wood is dry and crumbling pith. During the last fifteen years of Daniel Webster's life, his wonderfully imposing form and his immense reputation concealed from the public the decay of his powers and the degeneration of his morals. At least, few said what perhaps many felt, that "he was not the man he had been." People went away from one of his ponderous and empty speeches disappointed, but not ill pleased to boast that they too had "heard Daniel Webster speak," and feeling very sure that he could be eloquent, though he had not been. We heard one of the last of his out-of-door speeches. It was near Philadelphia, in 1844, when he was "stumping the State" for Henry Clay, and when our youthful feelings were warmly with the object of his speech. What a disappointment ! How poor and pompous and pointless it seemed ! Nor could we resist the impression that he was playing a part, nor help saying to ourselves, as we turned to leave the scene, "This man is not sincere in this : he is a humbug." And when, some years later, we saw him present himself before a large audience in a state not far removed from intoxication, and mumble incoherence for ten minutes, and when, in the course of the evening, we saw him make a great show of approval whenever the clergy were complimented, the impression was renewed that the man had expended his sincerity, and that nothing was real to him any more except wine and office. And even then such were the might and majesty of his presence, that he seemed to fill and satisfy the people by merely sitting there in an arm-chair, like Jupiter, in a spacious yellow waistcoat with two bottles of Madeira under it.

All this gradual, unseen deterioration of mind and character was revealed to the country on the 7th of March, 1850. What a downfall was there ! That shameful speech reads worse in 1867 than it did in 1850, and still exerts perverting power over timid and unformed minds. It was the very time for him to have broken finally with the "irreconcilable" faction, who, after having made President Tyler *snub* Daniel Webster from his dearly loved office of Secretary of State, had consummated the scheme which gave us Texas at the cost of war with Mexico, and California as one of the incidents of peace. California was not down in their programme ; and now, while claiming the right to make four slave States out of Texas, they refused to admit California to freedom. *Then* was it that Daniel Webster of Massachusetts rose in the Senate of the United States and said in substance this: These fine Southern brethren of ours have now stolen all the land there is to steal. Let us, therefore, put no obstacle in the way of their peaceable enjoyment of the plunder.

And the spirit of the speech was worse even than its doctrine. He went down upon the knees of his soul, and paid base homage to his own and his country's irreconcilable foes. Who knew better than Daniel Webster that John C. Calhoun and his followers had first created and then systematically fomented the hostile feeling which then existed between the North and the South ? How those men must have chuckled among themselves when they witnessed the willing degradation of the man who should have arraigned them before the country as the conscious enemies of its peace ! How was it that no one laughed outright at such billing and cooing as this ?

Mr. Webster. — "An honorable member [Calhoun], whose health does not allow him to be here to-day —"

A Senator. — "He is here."

Mr. Webster. — "I am very happy to hear that he is ; may he long be here, and in the enjoyment of health to serve his country !"

And this : —

Mr. Webster. — "The honorable member did not disguise his conduct or his motives."

Mr. Calhoun. — "Never, never."

Mr. Webster. — “What he means he is very apt to say.”

Mr. Calhoun. — “Always, always.”

Mr. Webster. — “And I honor him for it.”

And this : —

Mr. Webster. — “I see an honorable member of this body [Mason of Virginia] paying me the honor of listening to my remarks; he brings to my mind, Sir, freshly and vividly, what I learned of his great ancestor, so much distinguished in his day and generation, so worthy to be succeeded by so worthy a grandson.”

And this : —

Mr. Webster. — “An honorable member from Louisiana addressed us the other day on this subject. I suppose there is not a more amiable and worthy gentleman in this chamber, nor a gentleman who would be more slow to give offence to anybody, and he did not mean in his remarks to give offence. But what did he say? Why, Sir, he took pains to run a contrast between the slaves of the South and the laboring people of the North, giving the preference in all points of condition and comfort and happiness to the slaves.”

In the course of this speech there is one most palpable contradiction. In the beginning of it, the orator mentioned the change of feeling and opinion that had occurred as to the institution of slavery, — “the North growing much more warm and strong against slavery, and the South growing much more warm and strong in its support.” Once, he said, “the most eminent men, and nearly all the conspicuous politicians of the South, held the same sentiments, — that slavery was an evil, a blight, a scourge, and a curse”; but now it is “a cherished institution in that quarter; no evil, no scourge, but a great religious, social, and moral blessing.” He then asked how this change of opinion had been brought about, and thus answered the question: “I suppose, sir, this is owing to the rapid growth and sudden extension of the COTTON plantations in the South.” And to make the statement more emphatic, he caused the word *cotton* to be printed in capitals in the authorized edition of his works. But later in the speech, when he came to add his ponderous condemnation to the odium in which the handful of Abolitionists were held, — the *élite* of the nation from Franklin’s day to this, — then he attributed this remarkable change to *their* zealous efforts to awaken the nobler conscience of the

country. After giving his own version of their proceedings, he said: "Well, what was the result? The bonds of the slaves were bound more firmly than before, their rivets were more strongly fastened. Public opinion, which in Virginia had begun to be exhibited against slavery, and was opening out for the discussion of the question, drew back and shut itself up in its castle."

But all would not do. He bent the knee in vain. Vain too were his personal efforts, his Southern tour, his Astor House wooings,—the politicians would have none of him; and he had the cutting mortification of seeing himself set aside for a Winfield Scott.

Let us not, however, forget that on this occasion, though Daniel Webster appeared for the first time in his life as a leader, he was in reality still only a follower,—a follower, not of the public opinion of the North, but of the wishes of its capitalists. And probably many thousands of well-meaning men, not versed in the mysteries of politics, were secretly pleased to find themselves provided with an excuse for yielding once more to a faction, who had over us the immense advantage of having made up their minds to carry their point or fight. If his was the shame of this speech, ours was the guilt. He faithfully represented the portion of his constituents whose wine he drank, who helped him out with his notes, and who kept his atmosphere hazy with incense; and he faithfully represented, also, that larger number who wait till the wolf is at their door before arming against him, instead of meeting him afar off in the outskirts of the wood. Let us own it: the North yearned for peace in 1850,—peace at almost any price.

One of the most intimate of Mr. Webster's friends said, in a public address: "It is true that he desired the highest political position in the country,—that he thought he had fairly earned a claim to that position. And I solemnly believe that because that claim was denied his days were shortened." No enemy of the great orator ever uttered anything so severe against him as this, and we are inclined to think it an error. It was probably the strength of his desire for the Presidency that shortened his life, not the mere disappointment. When President Fillmore offered him the post of Secretary of State,

in 1850, it appears to have been his preference, much as he loved office, to decline it. He longed for his beautiful Marshfield, on the shore of the ocean, his herds of noble cattle, his broad, productive fields, his yachts, his fishing, his rambles in the forests planted by his own hand, his homely chats with neighbors and beloved dependents. "Oh!" said he, "if I could have my own will, never, never would I leave Marshfield again!" But his "friends," interested and disinterested, told him it was a shorter step from the office of Secretary of State to that of President than from the Senate-Chamber. He yielded, as he always did, and spent a long, hot summer in Washington, to the sore detriment of his health. And again, in 1852, after he had failed to receive the nomination for the Presidency, he was offered the place of Minister to England. His "friends" again advised against his acceptance. His letter to the President, declining the offer, presents him in a sorry light indeed. "I have made up my mind to think no more about the English mission. My principal reason is, that I think it would be regarded as a descent. . . . I have been accustomed to give instructions to ministers abroad, and not to receive them." Accustomed! Yes: for two years! It is probable enough that his acceptance of office, and his adherence to it, hastened his death. Four months after the words were written which we have just quoted, he was no more.

His last days were such as his best friends could have wished them to be,—calm, dignified, affectionate, worthy of his lineage. His burial, too, was singularly becoming, impressive, and touching. We have been exceedingly struck with the account of it given by Mr. George S. Hillard, in his truly elegant and eloquent eulogy upon Mr. Webster, delivered in Faneuil Hall. In his last will, executed a few days before his death, Mr. Webster requested that he might be buried "without the least show or ostentation, but in a manner respectful to my neighbors, whose kindness has contributed so much to the happiness of me and mine." His wishes were obeyed; and he was buried more as the son of plain, brave Captain Ebenezer Webster, than as Secretary of State. "No coffin," said Mr. Hillard, "concealed that majestic frame. In the open air, clad as when alive, he lay extended in seeming sleep, with no touch

of disfigurement upon his brow, — as noble an image of reposing strength as ever was seen upon earth. Around him was the landscape that he had loved, and above him was nothing but the dome of the covering heavens. The sunshine fell upon the dead man's face, and the breeze blew over it. A lover of Nature, he seemed to be gathered into her maternal arms, and to lie like a child upon a mother's lap. We felt, as we looked upon him, that death had never stricken down, at one blow, a greater sum of life. And whose heart did not swell when, from the honored and distinguished men there gathered together, six plain Marshfield farmers were called forth to carry the head of their neighbor to the grave. Slowly and sadly the vast multitude followed, in mourning silence, and he was laid down to rest among dear and kindred dust."

In surveying the life and works of this eminent and gifted man, we are continually struck with the evidences of his magnitude. He was, as we have said, a very large person. His brain was within a little of being one third larger than the average, and it was one of the largest three on record. His bodily frame, in all its parts, was on a majestic scale, and his presence was immense. He liked large things, — mountains, elms, great oaks, mighty bulls and oxen, wide fields, the ocean, the Union, and all things of magnitude. He liked great Rome far better than refined Greece, and revelled in the immense things of literature, such as *Paradise Lost* and the *Book of Job*, *Burke*, *Dr. Johnson*, and the *Sixth Book of the Æneid*. Homer he never cared much for, — nor, indeed, anything Greek. He hated, he loathed, the act of writing. Billiards, ten-pins, chess, draughts, whist, he never relished, though fond to excess of out-door pleasures, like hunting, fishing, yachting. He liked to be alone with great Nature, — alone in the giant woods or on the shores of the resounding sea, — alone all day with his gun, his dog, and his thoughts, — alone in the morning, before any one was astir but himself, looking out upon the sea and the glorious sunrise. What a delicious picture of this large, healthy Son of Earth Mr. Lanman gives us, where he describes him coming into his bedroom, at sunrise, and startling him out of a deep sleep by shouting, "Awake, sluggard! and look upon this glorious scene, for the sky and the ocean are enveloped in

flames ! ” He was akin to all large, slow things in nature. A herd of fine cattle gave him a keen, an inexhaustible enjoyment ; but he never “ tasted ” a horse : he had no horse enthusiasm. In England he chiefly enjoyed these five things, the Tower of London, Westminster Abbey, Smithfield Cattle Market, English farming, and Sir Robert Peel. Sir Robert Peel he thought was “ head and shoulders above any other man ” he had ever met. He greatly excelled, too, in describing immense things. In speaking of the Pyramids, once, he asked, “ Who can inform us by what now unknown machines mass was thus aggregated to mass, and quarry piled on quarry, till solid granite seemed to cover the earth and reach the skies.” His peculiar love of the Union of these States was partly due, perhaps, to this habit of his mind of dwelling with complacency on vastness. He felt that he wanted and required a continent to live in : his mind would have gasped for breath in New Hampshire.

But this enormous creature was not an exception to the law which renders giants harmless by seaming them with weakness, but for which the giants would possess the earth. If he had been completed throughout on the plan on which he was sketched, if he had been as able to originate as he was powerful to state, if he had possessed will proportioned to his strength, moral power equal to his moral feeling, intellect on a par with his genius, and principle worthy of his intellect, he would have subjugated mankind, and raised his country to a point from which it would have dropped when the tyrannizing influence was withdrawn. Every sphere of life has its peculiar temptations, which there is only one thing that can enable a man to resist,—a religious, i. e. a disinterested devotion to its duties. Daniel Webster was one of those who fell before the seductions of his place. He was not one of those who find in the happiness and prosperity of their country, and in the esteem of their fellow-citizens, their own sufficient and abundant reward for serving her. He pined for something lower, smaller,—something personal and vulgar. He had no religion,—not the least tincture of it ; and he seemed at last, in his dealings with individuals, to have no conscience. What he called his religion had no effect whatever upon the conduct of his life ; it made

him go to church, talk piously, puff the clergy, and “patronize Providence,” — no more. He would accept retaining fees, and never look into the bundles of papers which accompanied them, in which were enclosed the hopes and the fortune of anxious households. He would receive gifts of money, and toss into his waste-paper basket the list of the givers, without having glanced at its contents; thus defrauding them of the only recompense in his power to grant, and the only one they wished. It shocked him if his secretary came to the dinner-table in a frock-coat, and he would himself appear drunk before three thousand people. And yet, such was the power of his genius, such was the charm of his manner, such the affectionateness of his nature, such the robust heartiness of his enjoyment of life, that honorable men who knew his faults best loved him to the last, — not in spite of them, but partly in consequence of them. What in another man they would have pronounced atrocious, appeared in him a kind of graceful rollicking helplessness to resist.

Such, as it seems to our very imperfect judgment, was Daniel Webster, one of the largest and one of the weakest of men, of admirable genius and deplorable character; who began life well and served his country well and often, but held not out faithful to the end. American statesmen are called to a higher vocation than those of other countries, and there is nothing in the politics of America which *can* reward a man of eminent ability for public service. If such a person feels that his country's happiness and greatness will not be a satisfying recompense for anything he can do for her, let him, as he values his peace and soul's health, cling to the safe obscurity of private life.